

economic activities and although, formerly, there were organised hunts, today hunting is not much practised. 105

LUO EXPANSION

Until the time of European intervention the Luo appear to have been gradually expanding towards the south. This resulted in their division into two parts (on the north and south of the Kavirondo Gulf) namely: the Luo of Central Kavirondo and the Luo of Southern Kavirondo. Evans-Pritchard writes, "The southwards migration seems to have been across the Gulf from Uyoma and Asembo to Karacuny, and not round it, and to have taken place over several generations, commencing, if genealogies are to be trusted, about seven generations ago. Across the Gulf the Luo came up against the Bantu (Mwa) and Nilo-Hamitic (Langu) tribes."⁽¹⁾ The assimilation and absorption of these tribes was incomplete at the time of European occupation of the country. During this process of expansion there was a considerable dispersal of lineages so that lineages of the same clan are found in both Central and South Kavirondo. The Luo tribes least influenced by the Bantu are the Uyoma, Seme and Asembo and such tribes as pushed the southernmost Luo into Bantu country. 174 ●

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

At the present time Luoland is divided into a number of administrative locations which vary considerably in area and population. These locations, according to Evans-Pritchard, correspond approximately to the old tribal areas of the Luo. The expansion of the Luo has divided them into two main groups with Kisumu location forming a narrow territorial link between them: 631 101

1. The Luo of Central Kavirondo, known as Joiye (the inside people).
2. The Luo of Southern Kavirondo, known as Jooko (the outside people).⁽²⁾

THE TRIBE (Piay)

Among the Luo the tribe is an autonomous political unit. Like the Nuer tribes it may be defined in terms of the way in which homicide was formerly regarded and treated. 619 682

Compensation for homicide (cut) takes the form of handing over cattle, or a girl, to the kinsmen of a slain man so that heirs may be raised for him. Compensation is only paid for the killing of a tribesman, for men of other tribes, slain in war, raids or private conflict, are regarded as *wasigu*, enemies. On the other hand, compensation is not paid for killing a clansman, for such a deed is regarded as a sin, and propitiation and atonement have to be made by the sacrifice of an ox provided by the im-

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1949, No. VII, p.2.

(2) *Ibid.*

many cattle, sheep, and goats and most of their country is suitable for a pastoral life. Fishing plays a big part in the economy of the lakeside tribes. Hunting is little practised to-day, but in the old days organized battues were a regular feature. 105

The homestead, the residence of an elementary family or joint family, is generally called *dala*, a Bantu word, but in the more purely Luo parts of the country the Nilotic word *pacho* (pl. *mier*) is used, especially by the older men. It is usually surrounded by a thick hedge of euphorbia, a narrow gap in which is the entrance to the kraal, round which are the huts and granaries. Nothing is said about the domestic life of such homesteads nor of kinship life in this article, for its purpose is to outline the nature of the larger structural groups. 592

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At the present time Luoland is divided into a number of administrative locations. These locations, shown on the map, vary considerably in size of area and population. According to official returns most have populations of under 20,000 and the only two with populations of over 30,000 are Alego (53,604 with density of 244 to the square mile) and Samia (41,011 with density of 193). Density of population is greatest in some of the fertile northerly locations: North Ugenya (29,363 with density of 515), South Ugenya (7,497 with density of 341), and North Gem (29,014 with density of 387). It is lowest in some of the lakeside locations in South Kavirondo: Kasingiri (1,904 with density of 12), Kasigunga (2,041 with density of 21), and Gwasi (4,934 with density of 42). 631 162

These locations correspond approximately with the old tribal areas of the Luo. The main differences are that in South Kavirondo Karacuonyo location (28,207 with density of 167), Mumbo location (26,465 with density of 174), and Kabondo location (7,926 with density of 126) comprised a single tribe, as did North Gem and South Gem (19,442 with density of 237), North Ugenya and South Ugenya, and West Kano (28,617 with density of 265) and East Kano (25,730 with density of 158).

It is beyond question that the whole of Luoland was once occupied by Bantu and Nilo-Hamitic tribes and that the pressure which has continued, particularly against the Bantu, on the confines of Luoland to the north, east, and south, almost up to the present day is the end of a gradual process of expansion and assimilation. The Luo have been greatly influenced by Bantu culture during its development. 174 177

The expansion of the Luo towards the south has resulted in their division into two parts between which Kisumu location forms a narrow bridge, the Luo of Central Kavirondo, the *Joiye*, the 'Inside People', and the Luo of South Kavirondo, the *Jooko*, the 'Outside People'. The southwards migration seems to have been across the gulf from Uyoma and Asembo to Karacuonyo, and not round it and to have taken place over several generations, commencing, if the genealogies are to be trusted about seven generations ago. Across the gulf the Luo came up against Bantu (*Mwa*) and Nilo-Hamitic (*Langu*) tribes. The conquest and cultural 101 174

101 assimilation of these tribes were incomplete when European occupation
 ● 174 of the country slowed down the momentum of colonization. The tribes
 living to-day to the south of the gulf who are said to be Luo in origin and
 who speak Luo are Kano, Nyakac, Karacuonyo, (Mumbo, Kabondo,
 and Karacuonyo), Kocia, Kanyada, Gem, Kanyamwa, Karungu,
 Kadem, Kwabwai, Kanyadoto, Kabwoc, and Sakwa. The other loca-
 tions on the sketch-map are occupied by Bantu tribes who either speak
 Luo only, like the Kagan (included in the map in the Kocia location)
 and the Mohoru; or speak Luo as well as their own language, like the
 [191] Kaaigunga, Kaksingiri, and Gwasi. In one instance, that of the Wanjare,
 who are fraternal to the Karacuonyo, a Luo tribe is said to have adopted
 a Bantu dialect to the loss of their own tongue because, according to the
 Luo myth, their ancestor killed his father in a hunting accident, and they
 are, on account of their Luo origin, regarded more favourably by the Luo
 than other Bantu-speaking tribes. The Kamagambo and Kanyamkago
 are said to be of Nilo-Hamitic origin, though both speak Luo to-day.
 Tribes which to-day speak only Luo and have Luo customs are regarded
 as Luo and it would be most insulting to call a member of one of them
 'Jamua' or 'Langu'. There is much intermarriage between Luo of pure
 [582] descent and assimilated or partly assimilated Bantu. At the present day
 563 there is also some intermarriage with the Kisii Bantu, though I was told
 that a Luo would not take one of their daughters as his chief wife. In
 [191] Central Kavirondo assimilation in the areas of conquest and settlement
 has gone much further and, except for the Waholo, who speak both Luo
 and Bantu, the line of linguistic cleavage is clearer cut.

174 Luo expansion at the expense of the Bantu was like a line of shunting
 619 trucks, each tribe driving out the one in front of it to seek compensation
 from one yet further in front, generally a Bantu tribe. Thus when the
 Uyoma and Asembo tribes jointly occupied what is now Uyoma territory
 they found there the tribes of Karacuonyo and Gem (of South Kavirondo)
 whom they pushed across the gulf into what was then Bantu country.
 Later the Uyoma people drove out the Asembo people into their present
 territory. These movements have led to a considerable dispersal of lineages
 so that lineages of the same clan are found to-day in both Central and South
 Kavirondo. Lineages of the same clan are found in the Gem tribe of South
 Kavirondo and in the tribe of the same name in Central Kavirondo,
 lineages of the Kanyada tribe have agnatic kinship with the Jokakan
 lineage of the Alego tribe, and the Luo elements in the Kowak and Ka-
 mageta tribes of Tanganyika are said to have come from Kajulu and
 Kadimo and to have kinsmen in those areas.

It is not surprising therefore that the late comers who pushed other
 Luo tribes into contact with, and conquest of, Bantu are held to have
 been the least influenced by Bantu culture in their speech and way of life.
 [133] This reputation is enjoyed by the people of Uyoma, Seme, and Asembo.
 The low-lying country of these tribes, a thornwood savannah plain with
 patches of swamp and treeless grassland, from which Seme takes its
 name, suffers from seasonal drought: in all reminding one of the homelands
 of some of the Nilotic cousins of the Luo in the Sudan.

000 naturally follow the low country instead of climbing a precipitous rocky ridge 2,000 feet above the plain, added to this probably the dread of the Nandi warriors was an additional reason for avoiding the highlands.

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512] It seemed possible that some evidence of the migration might be discovered by investigations in this plain; and such was the case, for to my great surprise I found that the ruling chief of the plain Kitoto, although he wears ornaments of the Nilotic type and is married to Ja-Luo wives, is a pure-bred native of the Kisii or Kossova nation, and that a few generations back occasional bands of Kisii people trekked northwards but were stopped in the plain, and became more or less absorbed by the Nyamoga clan. In fact odd parties of Kisii people make journeys northward even to this day. The Kisii people again have legends to the effect that they originally came from the southward, and I have no doubt that as investigations are continued it will be found that the Kisii and Ware tribes are two links in the chain of evidence in favour of an important Bantu migration from Nyanwezi country northwards.

With regard to the Awa-Ware, they do not seem to have gone inland to any extent, but to have crept along by water from island to island till they ended up in the vicinity of Nyala or Port Victoria. Their dialect is closely allied to that of the Awa-Nyala.

It is a matter for regret that it is almost impossible to arrive at even the approximate dates of these migrations, but among a people without written history and legends that rarely go back more than a few generations it will readily be understood that one's data is scanty.

174 *Class II. Nilotic Kavirondo.*—The invasion of the Nilotic Ja-Luo race (Plate III) appears, as I have previously explained, to have taken place later than that of the Bantu, and they are it is believed an off-shoot of the Acholi or Shuli stock.

Their southern advance was, I feel sure, only checked by the irruption of the Elgumi people into the country to the south-west of Mount Elgon, which movement finally closed the line of outlet against all further movements from the north.

The Elgumi people will, I think, be found to be an off-shoot of the race inhabiting the country to the north of the Salisbury and Kumama Lakes, which in the fragmentary state of our information about that area may be called the Lango group, and it may turn out that these people are intermingled with a Hamitic strain from the north-east.

To revert to Kavirondo proper, the Nilotic stock in that country, although occupying as a rule a less fertile area, appears to be more vigorous than the Bantu; and the Lakoli and other Bantu tribes on their present eastern frontier all tell me that their forefathers occupied territory some fifteen miles to the west of their original location, having been gradually driven eastward by the Ja-Luo.

The Ja-Luo settlements on the southern shore of Ugowe Bay, or Kavirondo Bay as it has been renamed, are also evidences of the persistent way the Nile people have pushed southwards in search of land, and proofs are to hand that

● 174 most of these people did not pass round the head of the gulf but crossed by water from Uyoma and Gemi country.

ooo *Class III. Nandi Group.*—Hardly any information seems obtainable with regard to the southern migration of the Nandi-Lumbwa group, nor is their place of origin quite clear. Their word for water, *piger*, is clearly Nilotic, and some of their numerals, including *tomon* for ten, are Hamitic: so, like the Masai, they will possibly be eventually classed as an intermixture of the negroes of the Nile valley and a representative of the Hamitic race. This seems to be the only way in which one can account for the great difference in physical appearance between the Nandi and Masai as compared with the Nilotic or Bantu negroes of Kavirondo for instance. Again, judging by appearances, one would imagine that the Nandi were more nearly allied to their negro progenitors than to the Hamitic, and *vice versa* in the case of the Masai, or rather that the Hamitic strain was much stronger in the Masai.

That the Nandi came from the north is beyond doubt, and it is also probable that they came from a mountainous region somewhat similar to that they now inhabit, for being tribes of considerable bravery when compared with the neighbouring races, they could undoubtedly have had choice of location: and moreover every member of the group seems to have chosen a highland territory as a place of settlement.

I am inclined to date their migration at a fairly remote period owing to the large area over which the group has spread, and in this case great divergence from the original stock may be looked for in their language and habits. In a short time, however, when our information as to the mountainous area to the south-west of Abyssinia becomes more complete, it will probably be easy to follow their southern move.

The Elgeyo, Kamasia, Lako, Elgonyi, Mbai, Soré and Bumett people all belong to this group; the five latter tribes live on Mt. Elgon or Masawa, and it may be that on their way southwards a section of the migrants elected to settle on the mountain, the main body pushing on to the south and east. These tribes now consider the Nandi people as their deadly enemies, and strenuously deny all relationship.

Class IV. Masai Group.—I will not deal with the whole of the Masai nation but confine myself to the Guasangishu, as they are the only representatives of the group in the country referred to in this volume.

Their language, customs, arms and physical appearance (Pl. IV) are the same as those of the Masai of the Rift valley, but they differ from those people inasmuch as they have given up their nomadic habits and now live in scattered settlements among the Kavirondo, Nandi, etc. Their principal settlements are in Marama, some few miles south of Mumia's, at Ndui's, about seven miles west of Mumia's, at Ugema, between Ketosh and Elgumi country, and again a few odd settlements in Nandi and in the vicinity of Eldama Ravine. The Guasangishu Elkonono, or ironworkers, are also dotted about throughout Nandi and Lumbwa, and do most

[pp. 11-25 not processed]

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In the Eastern corner was a small length of inner wall covered with dry grass, from which a shrub was growing so as to leave a covered but hollow space between the walls.

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The altar-post mentioned in the report and which is now in the Museum, is a piece of wood standing some 3½ to 4 feet high and about 5 or 6 inches in diameter. One end has been carved with the result that it appears to be an unmistakeable phallus. That this is intentional, however, has been strongly denied by all those questioned about it, and, from the manner of my informants, I am inclined to believe that what they say is true—as far as it goes, and for the following reasons. In every Luo boma the cattle are tied up at night to wooden posts embedded in the ground. Each beast as a rule has a post—called in Dholuo, "Loch,"—to itself. Where the owner of the boma has an exceptionally fine bullock he marks it out for distinction by putting a metal bell—not unlike a Swiss cattle-bell—round it's neck and further he carves it an especially ornamental Loch. This carving is almost invariably phallic in shape, and I expect that the idol in the Museum was probably a loch uprooted from a nearby boma.

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The point which was stressed to me was that although nearly all carved Loches appear to be undeniably phallic, yet this is entirely accidental and has no intended sexual symbolism or meaning whatsoever. It was just the custom to carve them thus.

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Now I am prepared to believe that the phallic appearance of these Loches is produced unconsciously and without sexual significance, but, considering the geographical origin of the Luo and further the nature of the Mumbo beliefs, I consider that it is more than probable that the Loches in their present-day domestic capacity are the unconscious relics of phallic cults and practices handed down from unremembered antiquity, and have by now lost all their former phallic meaning. That they have been seized on as symbols in this religion is not surprising when one considers firstly their probable origin, which I have just indicated, and secondly the fact that the gospel of Mumboism in its promises of plenty without having to work for it (the phallus always having been the symbol of Fertility and Plenty) is typical of all phallic religions. If their choice of a phallus for a symbol is not an unconscious re-emergence of long forgotten rites, then it is an extremely interesting instinctive gesture that their choice of emblem should coincide with that of other and unconnected races who held parallel beliefs.

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It would seem then that Mumboism is a mixture of the old Luo religion of sun worship, and of an even older religion, long forgotten in the mists of Time and now reappearing in a new guise.

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The prophecies of Mumbo having failed, the cult is dying out, especially in Central Kavirondo, though it appears to be rather more tenacious in South Kavirondo. Further, active discouragement by the Government and the work of the Missions will soon banish it

- [10] The manners and customs of the *Ja-luo*, a fragment of the Nilotic peoples which is now isolated, are very similar to those of the Aluru (to the north-west of the Albert Nyanza) and the Japalua (incorrectly called [17] "Shefalu"), who live in the northern part of Unyoro. It would seem, indeed, as though at some time or other the Ja-luo of Southern Kavirondo had not come down direct from the north-west, from the Lango country where their nearest relations reside at the present day, but that a large tribe of Nilotic people closely allied to the Acholi and Lango had formerly

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NILOTIC NEGROES

101 inhabited Northern Unyoro (where a fragment of them remains), and that
 74 the Bahima and their Bantu subjects drove this branch of the Nilotic
 people across the Albert Nile to the north-west (where they remain as the
 Aluru) and into Busoga (across the Victoria Nile) on the south-east.
 From Busoga they appear to have been driven on by the Bantu right
 through the Kavirondo country until they finally settled and thrrove round
 the shores of Kavirondo Bay, where they at present bear the name of
 Ja-luo or Nyifwa. It is a remarkable fact that the Ja-luo to this day are

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437. A RAFT MADE OF PAPTUS BUNDLES, WHITE NILE

called by their Bantu neighbours "Abanyoro," which would indicate that
 this theory of their origin is correct.

361 The Ja-luo reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts, which are
 surrounded by hedges of aloe and euphorbia. Formerly they built mud
 178 or stone walls round their settlements in imitation of the Bantu Kavirondo
 to the north. But this is a custom which has now died out. The houses
 342 are similar in appearance to those of the Bantu tribes around them, as is
 the arrangement about the two fireplaces. Young unmarried girls usually
 513 sleep together in one large hut under the care of an old woman. The
 882 young men and boys of the village also sleep by themselves, generally

THE NILOTIC KAVIRONDO.

BY G. A. S. NORTHCOTE.

101 THE Nilotic Kavirondo, or Jaluo as they should more properly be called, who inhabit the north-eastern shore of the Victoria Nyanza, belong to the same family as the great Dinka tribe of the Soudan and are near relations of the Aluri and Acholi tribes which live on both sides of the Nile near Wadilai, the differences being far less marked than those between two adjoining Bantu tribes usually are.

174 In all probability, therefore, the Jaluo originally formed one tribe with the Acholi. What their reasons for migration were cannot be ascertained, but probably it was due to overcrowding or to a dispute about the chieftaincy. The natives themselves can throw but little light on the matter: they state that they came from the north-west under one big chief and that when they *again* became too numerous they split up into smaller chieftaincies. The fact that they lay stress on their again increasing numbers points to the conclusion that overcrowding [626] was their motive for migrating; but as will be seen later, they use secession as their chief weapon against an unpopular chief. Had they been driven out by conquest there would be abundant traces of such a cause, but no such signs are visible.

142 In appearance the Jaluo are a fine race, not so much remarkable for beauty of face as for stature and development. They are a large-boned and deep-chested tribe, somewhat fleshy and very muscular. They present a great contrast in this last respect to the other Nilotic tribes in British East Africa, the Masai, Nandi and Lumbwa. All four are capable of great endurance, but none of the last three named can claim to be a muscular race. The superior physique of the Jaluo is probably [262] due mainly to their agricultural and industrial habits and to the fact that their food is mainly vegetable, while up to the great cattle plague of 1883, the Masai, Nandi and Lumbwa lived entirely upon animal food.

291 Facially the Kavirondo have rather squat noses, large mouths and big wide-opened eyes. The everyday dress of the men consists of a goat skin hung over the right shoulder, or of nothing. In most cases they have quantities of iron wire on [30] their legs and arms and strings of beads round their necks. The women are usually completely nude, except that married women wear a small grass tassel behind, hanging from the waist; latterly, however, they have taken to wearing a strip of cloth round the waist about six or eight inches in breadth and only just meeting in front.

[561] The tassels are discarded when a woman's husband dies and cannot be again worn until she is re-married. It is significant of the respect which the Jaluo have